

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 INR-05 PM-03 SP-02  
SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 INRE-00  
/040 W

-----041926 070916Z /21

O P 070810Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2621  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10376

LIMDIS

TEHRAN FOR UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PEPR, AF, PK, IN, US, IR  
SUBJECT: UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S VISIT:  
BACKGROUND MATERIALS

1. THIS IS THE FINAL BACKGROUN PIECE FOR UNDER SECRETARY  
NEWSOM'S VISIT TO NEW DELHI WHICH SETS FORTH INDIAN VIEWS AND  
POLICY ON THE RECENT COUP IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS  
FOR THE REGION.

2. INDIAN POLICY. THE POTENTIAL DANGER POSED TO REGIONAL  
STABILITY BY THE COUP IN AFGHANISTAN HAS PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE  
AND SENSITIVITY FOR INDIA. IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGH-  
BORS AND A READJUSTMENT IN RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION  
AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE BEEN THE FOCUS OF THE JANATA GOV-  
ERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY. THE EVENTS IN AFGHANISTAN ARE A  
CHALLENGE TO THAT POLICY AND THREATEN TO UNDERMINE THE GAINS  
ACHIEVED. FOR THIS REASON ALONE, THE INDIANS CANNOT BE HAPPY

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WITH THE COMING TO POWER OF A SOVIET-INFLUENCED COMMUNIST  
REGIME AND THE ATTENDANT UNDERMINING OF PAKISTAN'S CONFIDENCE.  
NEVERTHELESS, THE INDIANS ARE CONTINUING THEIR POLICY OF IN-  
SISTING THAT GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS AND INCREASED REGIONAL  
COOPERATION ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS OF ENSURING REGIONAL  
STABILITY.

3. THE INDIANS WERE QUICK TO RECOGNIZE THE DRA, ARGUING PUBLICLY THAT AN INTERNAL CHANGE IN AFGHANISTAN WAS NOT A FACTOR IN THE TRADITIONALLY FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND PRIVATELY THAT ALL ENCOURAGEMENT SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO THE DRA TO MAINTAIN A NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY AND TO PROVIDE IT ALTERNATIVES TO A TOTAL SOVIET EMBRACE. THE INDIANS HAVE CHOSEN TO EMPHASIZE THE NATIONALISTIC ELEMENTS OF THE AFGHAN REVOLUTION, RATHER THAN ITS MARXISM, AND TO STRESS THE HISTORIC COMMITMENT OF THE AFGHANS TO INDEPENDENCE AND TO THEIR RELIGION. THE INDIANS HAVE ALSO CONVEYED TO THE AFGHANS THEIR WILLINGNESS TO INCREASE ASSISTANCE, IN ORDER TO BUTTRESS AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE AND TO MAINTAIN INDIAN INFLUENCE AND BONA FIDES AS A GOOD FRIEND.

4. WHILE THE GOI IS FOLLOWING A POLICY OF ADVOCATING THAT NOTHING BE DONE TO FORECLOSE AFGHANISTAN'S OPTIONS, PARALLEL TO US POLICY, THEY ARE LESS SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE REGION AND SEE LESS POTENTIAL THREAT TO PAKISTAN.

5. THE INDIAN VIEW OF SOVIET INTENTIONS IS SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS. THE INDIANS ACKNOWLEDGE THAT "SOME" IN MOSCOW WILL PRESS TO REINFORCE THE TARAKI REGIME AND TIE IT CLOSE TO THE USSR, AND THEY AGREE THAT IT REMAINS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE USSR WILL ALLOW THE DRA TO SET ITS OWN NON-ALIGNED COURSE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INDIANS ALSO ARGUE THAT THE SOVIETS ARE GENUINELY COMMITTED TO DETENTE AND WILL NOT RISK THIS LARGER SECRET

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OBJECTIVE IN AN EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION OVER AFGHANISTAN. THE INDIANS SAY THAT THEY HAVE EMPHASIZED TO THE SOVIETS THIS "BIGGER PICTURE," ARGUING THAT IT IS AS MUCH AGAINST SOVIET AS AGAINST INDIAN INTERESTS TO HAVE AFGHANISTAN BECOME A SOURCE OF REGIONAL INSTABILITY AND BIG POWER CONFRONTATION. WE SUSPECT THAT THE INDIANS HAVE NOT GONE MUCH BEYOND THIS GENERAL FORMULATION IN DISCUSSING THEIR CONCERNS WITH THE SOVIETS.

6. WE BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE THOSE IN THE GOI WHO WILL ARGUE THAT GIVEN THE IMPRESSIVE SOVIET GAIN IN THE AREA, INDIA SHOULD MOVE TO STRENGTHEN AGAIN ITS TIES WITH THE USSR. IN THIS RESPECT, THE ADDITION OF AN UNSCHEDULED VISIT TO MOSCOW TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE'S TRIP TO PEKING IN THE AUTUMN IS SEEN BY SOME AS AN INDICATION OF INCREASED GOI NERVOUSNESS ABOUT SOVIET REACTION TO ITS FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVES. BALANCING THIS VIEW OF A POTENTIAL NEW ASCENDANCY FOR THE SOVIETS IS THE SUSPICION OF SOME OBSERVERS THAT, GIVEN MORARJI DESAI'S LONG-STANDING DISLIKE OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM AND HIS CRITICISM OF THE INDO-SOVIET RELATIONSHIP IN MRS. GANDHI'S TIME, THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE TAKES A MORE NEGATIVE STANCE THAN DO THE PROFESSIONALS IN THE FOREIGN MIN-

ISTRY TOWARD THE SOVIETS AS A RESULT OF THE KABUL COUP AND SOV-  
IET ADVENTURISM IN AFRICA.

WHATEVER MIGHT BE THE DEGREE OF  
DIFFERENCE WITHIN THE GOI, HOWEVER, THERE IS NO INDICATION  
IT HAS OR WILL IN THE NEAR FUTURE MATERIALLY AFFECT INDIA'S  
CAREFULLY ARTICULATED POLICY OF OPENNESS TOWARD THE NEW AFGHAN  
REGIME AND OF MEASURED WARNINGS ABOUT THE DANGERS TO REGIONAL  
STABILITY OF EITHER PRECIPITOUS ACTION BY STATES IN THE AREA  
OR A GREAT POWER CONFRONTATION.

7. OF MORE IMMEDIATE CONCERN TO THE INDIANS THAN EVENTS IN  
AFGHANISTAN ITSELF OR THE DEGREE OF SOVIET CONTROL IS THE PAK-  
ISTANI REACTION. THE INDIANS RECOGNIZE THAT PAKISTAN HAS  
LEGITIMATE CONCERNS ABOUT THE SENSITIVE BORDER ISSUES AND MUST  
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BE REASSURED OF SUPPORT FOR ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. THE  
GOI CONSIDERS IT IN INDIA'S INTERESTS TO HAVE A STRONG AND

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 10376

LIMDIS

TEHRAN FOR UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM

UNITED PAKISTAN. NEVERTHELESS, THEY BELIEVE THAT THE CURRENT

LEVEL OF PAKISTANI APPREHENSIONS IS NOT JUSTIFIED. THEY ARGUE THAT SIMILAR CONCERNS ABOUT PUSHTUNISTAN WERE RAMPANT WHEN DAOUD CAME TO POWER AND THAT THE NEW LEADERS IN AFGHANISTAN ARE UNLIKELY TO STIR UP THE TRIBAL ISSUE WHICH CAN REDOUND AGAINST THEM.

8. THE INDIANS CHARACTERIZE THE GOP'S RESPONSE AS ONE OF PANIC WHICH RUNS THE RISK OF PRECIPITATING PAKISTAN'S OWN WORST FEARS REGARDING CONFLICT OVER THE ISSUE. THE INDIANS ALSO SEE IN PAKISTAN A PERVERSIVE ANTI-INDIAN ATTITUDE, AND THEY ARE EXTREMELY RESENTFUL OF GOP ALLEGATIONS OF A "MOSCOW-KABUL-DELHI" AXIS AND THE IMPLICATION THAT INDIA HAD A HAND IN THE COUP AND SUPPORTS SOVIET/AFGHAN AMBITIONS IN THE REGION AT THE EXPENSE OF PAKISTAN. (THE INDIANS HAVE NOT EXPRESSED A VIEW TO US ON PAKISTAN'S CONTRADICTORY COMPLAINTS OF A TEHRAN-DELHI AXIS.) THE INDIANS ALSO THINK THAT THE PAKISTANIS ARE EXPLOITING THE DANGERS OF THE AFGHAN COUP IN ORDER TO ELICIT  
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ARMS FROM THE WEST, AND THEY DISMISS PAKISTAN'S THREATS TO QUIT CENTO AS ATTEMPTS AT BLACKMAIL. FAR FROM SYMPATHETIC TO THE VIEW THAT PAKISTAN NEEDS ADDITIONAL OUTSIDE BUTTRESSING, THE INDIANS INSTEAD ARGUE THAT A MAJOR REASON FOR PAKISTAN'S WEAKNESS IS ITS LONG NEGLECT OF BUILDING DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED RELIANCE ON EXTERNAL ALLIANCES. THUS, THE INDIANS STRESS THAT THE PAK-AFGHANISTAN PROBLEM IS BASICALLY A POLITICAL ONE OF WORKING FOR STABILITY IN THE FRONTIER REGION AND NOT A QUESTION OF FURTHER ARMS ACQUISITION.

9. THE INDIANS SAY THAT THEY HAVE GIVEN THE GOP AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL REASSURANCE OF THE GOI'S GOOD INTENTIONS TOWARD PAKISTAN IN THE WAKE OF THE COUP IN AFGHANISTAN. THEY COMPLAIN, HOWEVER, THAT THE PAKISTANIS DO NOT BELIEVE INDIAN REASSURANCES AND ARE SUSPICIOUS OF ANY ACTION THAT INDIA TAKES. THEY PROFESS TO SEE LITTLE FURTHER THAT THEY CAN DO TO BOLSTER PAKISTAN'S SELF CONFIDENCE, ARGUING THAT WERE INDIA TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVES IN THIS REGARD IT WOULD ONLY SERVE TO HEIGHTEN PAKISTAN'S SUSPICIONS AND THUS WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. THEY SUGGEST THAT IT IS BETTER FOR INDIA TO BE RESPONSIVE TO PAKISTANI REQUESTS FOR REASSURANCE ON QUESTIONS LIKE THE INVIOABILITY OF ITS BORDERS RATHER THAN TO TAKE THE LEAD. AS A COROLLARY, THEY PROPOSE THAT OTHERS, SUCH AS THE US AND IRAN, COUNSEL PAKISTAN TO TAKE A MORE MODERATE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AFGHAN COUP AND A MORE RATIONAL VIEW OF INDIA'S POSITION. THE GOI HAS NOT BEEN RECEPTIVE TO SUGGESTIONS THAT IT CONSIDER SPECIFIC ACTS OF REASSURANCE SUCH AS A REGIONAL PACT TO BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

10. DURING THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON, THE INDIANS DID NOT OPPOSE OUR DESIRE TO FIND WAYS TO REASSURE PAK-

ISTAN, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF ARMS TRANSFERS. HOWEVER,  
WE DO NOT THINK THIS RESPONSE SHOULD BE TAKEN FOR ACQUIES-  
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CENCE. THE INDIANS HAVE WARNED ALREADY THAT THEY DO NOT SEE  
THE MILITARY ROUTE AS THE SOLUTION TO PAK-AFGHAN PROBLEMS,  
AND THEY WILL BE PRONE TO SEE ANY PAKISTANI MILITARY BUILDUP  
ON AN APPRECIABLE SCALE AS DIRECTED NOT AGAINST AFGHANISTAN  
BUT INDIA. INDIAN PUBLIC AND POLITICAL OPINION WILL NOT IN-  
TERPRET PAKISTAN'S ACQUISITION OF NEW MILITARY HARDWARE AS  
EQUIVALENT TO INDIA'S OWN EFFORTS AT MODERNIZATION OF ITS  
ARMED FORCES. THUS, EVEN IF THE GOI WERE PRIVATELY TO AGREE  
WITH US THAT A CERTAIN LEVEL OF ARMS TRANSFER WAS A MODEST  
ONE, THEY WOULD BE UNDER DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE TO EXPRESS  
CONCERN, AT THE MINIMUM. THE GOI MAY BE HOLDING ITS COUNSEL  
ON THIS ISSUE AT PRESENT TO OFFSET US CRITICISM OF ITS OWN  
PROJECTED PURCHASE OF THE DPSA.

11. THE ARMS ISSUE ASIDE, THE INDIANS HAVE OTHER REASONS FOR  
NOT WANTING TO APPEAR TO BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF EFFORTS TO  
REASSURE PAKISTAN. BECAUSE OF THEIR GLOBAL AND BILATERAL  
INTERESTS, THEY WILL NOT PERMIT THEMSELVES IN THIS CONTEXT  
TO SEEM TO BE COOPERATING IN AN ANTI-SOVIET EFFORT. ADDI-  
TIONALLY, IN THE PRESENT SITUATION THEY CONSIDER THAT THE  
BEST POLICY IS TO GIVE THE AFGHANS AS MANY OPTIONS AS POS-  
SIBLE. IN PURSUING THIS POLICY ACTIVELY, THEY KNOW THAT THEY  
RISK OFFENDING THE PAKISTANIS BUT BELIEVE THE PAKISTANIS WILL  
BE UNHAPPY WITH THEM IN ANY EVENT.  
GOHEEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 07 jul 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**To:** STATE TEHRAN  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014